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Making the European Union a Driving Force in the Future of Space

Toulouse, 16 february 2022

A Word from the Minister: A Strong and Sovereign European Space Policy



Bruno Le Maire,
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Economy, Finance
and the Recovery

Nurtured by our joint determination to achieve strategic autonomy and scientific supremacy, the space sector has epitomised European excellence for decades now. Economic initiative has elevated it to world-class status. The sector has been the bedrock for technologies, know-how and global expertise but it is now facing increased international competition.

The space programme is both a sprint and a race to reach ambitious objectives. We need to invest more, create an entrepreneurial culture in the sector and continue writing European space history!

The EU must make the most of the key assets at its disposal. These include top scientific teams and industrialists, a competitive industry and a longstanding commitment punctuated by many victories. This has all been made possible by the unwavering political will of all the Member States to build a successful space policy.

Our goals need to match the challenges thrown up by the space sector so that Europe can continue to rival the United States and China in this area.

Our sovereignty also depends on the support of France and Europe for the expansion of space infrastructure, for our domestic defence programmes and the Copernicus and Galileo programmes, and the Secure Connectivity Initiative on a new constellation at European level. Since the first launches of Ariane rockets, France has been adamant about supporting the European space sector and has always been a driving force in European programmes. France will be playing a key role in 2022 both through its six-month Presidency of the Council of the European Union and as Co-Chair of the European Space Agency (ESA).

Against this backdrop, the French Presidency is looking to make a positive contribution to the EU's imperatives which revolve around a number of priorities: harnessing data from space, the space defence sector, the European initiative on a constellation for secure connectivity, the Copernicus Horizon 2035 project and the completion of the Galileo programme.

These priorities will be central to discussions at the informal meeting of European Ministers responsible for Space in Toulouse on 16 February 2022.

The issues of Europe's space exploration ambitions and how space can contribute to climate change research will also be on the agenda of the ESA Ministerial Council meeting which will be held on the same day.

CONTENTS

A Word from the Minister: A Strong and Sovereign European Space Policy	2
Introduction.....	4
Informal Meeting of European Ministers Responsible for Space: Addressing Fundamental Challenges.....	6
Conference Agenda.....	7
Liste des participants	8
Overview of the Host City and Meeting Venue.....	11

Introduction

The French Presidency of the Council of the European Union

On 1 January 2022, for the first time in 14 years, France will take over the Presidency of the Council of the European Union. How does the Council of the EU work and what will France's role be?

What does the Presidency of the Council of the European Union involve?

A rotating Presidency

Each Member State holds the presidency of the Council of the European Union for six months on a rotating basis. **France will hold the Presidency of the Council of the EU from 1 January to 30 June 2022.** The Presidency of the Council organises meetings, brokers compromises, submits conclusions and ensures the coherency and continuity of the decision-making process. It ensures good cooperation between all Member States and acts as a liaison between the Council and the European institutions, in particular the Commission and the European Parliament.

What is the Council of the European Union?

The Council of the European Union, also called the Council of Ministers, or simply the Council, brings together the ministers of the EU Member States who meet in configurations by sector of activity. It serves as the co-legislator of the European Union, along with the European Parliament.

Concretely, ministers will chair ten sectors or configurations of the Council of the EU: general affairs, economic and financial affairs, justice and home affairs, employment, social policy, health and consumer protection policy; competitiveness (internal market, industry, research and space); transport, telecommunications and energy; agriculture and fisheries; environment; education, youth, culture and sport; trade. Exceptionally, the Foreign Affairs Council is chaired by the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, currently Mr Josep Borrell.

The Council also has budgetary powers; it adopts and amends the European budget with the Parliament. Lastly, the Council adopts certain decisions as well as non-binding recommendations, concludes international agreements on behalf of the EU, and appoints members of certain institutions such as the European Court of Auditors, the European Economic and Social Committee and the European Committee of the Regions. The Council's deliberations and votes on legislative texts are public.

What is the framework for the French Presidency of the Council of the European Union?

The PFUE follows the main policy lines that President Macron set out in his speech for a sovereign, united and democratic Europe on 26 September 2017 at the Sorbonne. For the past four years, President Macron and the Government have been working to build genuine European sovereignty, meaning Europe's ability to exist in the world and to defend our values and interests. The French Presidency of the Council of the European Union will continue this work for a more inclusive, sovereign and democratic Europe.

The PFUE meets citizens' expectations, which were expressed in the citizen debates held in September in 18 French regions as part of the Conference on the Future of Europe. This project, proposed by France in 2019, established a new forum for debate with European citizens. The final contribution of these national panels was submitted to the Government in the autumn. Recommendations made by citizens, in France and in Europe, have helped determine the priorities of the French Presidency of the Council of the European Union.

The PFUE coordinates within the trio presidency programme, with which France aligns its action. This system, which has existed since 2009, sets long-term goals and defines the main topics to be addressed over a period of 18 months. After the Slovenian Presidency, France will begin a new cycle and will work as a trio with the Czech Republic in the second half of 2022 and Sweden in the first half of 2023.

Nearly 400 events

A total of nearly 400 events planned in France and the EU will punctuate the Presidency: political meetings, a cultural programme and citizen events open to everyone.

→ Find all information about the French Presidency of the Council of the European Union on the Presidency's official website and social media:

- Website: www.europe2022.fr
- [Facebook](#)
- [Instagram](#)
- [LinkedIn](#)
- [Twitter](#)
- [YouTube](#)
- [Flickr](#)

The Council of the European Union should not be confused with:

The European Council, which brings together Heads of State and Government of Member States and defines the overall political direction and priorities of the European Union. Its current President is Charles Michel.

The Council of Europe, which is an intergovernmental organisation made up of 47 Member States. Founded in 1949, the Council of Europe promotes human rights, democracy and the rule of law. Its seat is in Strasbourg and its Secretary-General is Marija Pejčinović Burić.

For more information:

- www.touteurope.eu
- <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/council-eu/>

Informal Meeting of European Ministers Responsible for Space: Addressing Fundamental Challenges

The informal meeting of European Ministers responsible for Space, hosted in Toulouse, France, will cover an array of space issues, including treating space as critical connectivity infrastructure for the economy, developing common rules for space traffic, and leveraging space to fight climate change, improve scientific research and expand space exploration capabilities.

This event will open in the morning with an informal meeting of the Competitiveness Council of the European Union, followed by a Ministers' joint working lunch and a meeting of the European Space Agency (ESA) Council.

Informal Competitiveness Council meeting on space

The informal Competitiveness Council meeting on space will focus on two strategic matters: **space traffic management** and the **European Secure Connectivity Initiative**, a constellation of interconnected communication satellites intended to greatly expand internet access. Thierry Breton, EU Commissioner for the Internal Market, will present the European Commission's ambitions in these areas.

This meeting will provide an opportunity for EU Ministers to **offer their input on the Commission's objectives**. These discussions will set the tone for the next five months of the French Presidency, which is set to oversee negotiations on a draft regulation with an eye to clarifying procedures for implementing the Secure Connectivity Initiative.

The Commission's work on space traffic management represents a first step towards adopting a European approach to setting common rules for space exploration. The French Presidency will thus work on determining a common EU position on space traffic management that ensures sustainability, safety and security, and is based on three pillars: space surveillance capabilities, standards for space activities and their promotion at global level.

In addition, the ESA will outline its goals regarding the **protection of EU space assets** and the **Rapid and Resilient Crisis Response Accelerator**, two programmes that will be instrumental in the Commission's initiatives.

Ministers' joint working lunch

Bringing together EU Ministers and ESA Ministers, the joint working lunch will tackle such topics as the **climate** and how space can contribute to climate change research, as well as **space exploration**, with inspiring presentations given by aerospace players, including **innovative start-ups**.

ESA Ministerial Council meeting

In the afternoon, **the ESA Ministerial Council** will assemble all ESA Member States, i.e. the 27 EU Member States plus Norway, Switzerland and the UK, as well as Canada, participating as a Cooperating State.

The Council will discuss climate change and build on the issues raised during the Ministers' joint working lunch, such as the **Space for a Green Future Accelerator**, an initiative to help Europe act to mitigate climate change by harnessing data from space

Lastly, the Council will cover **the role of science and space exploration**: a presentation of the ESA vision and a round the table discussion will provide the latest insights into Europe's ambitions in these realms, with a special focus on the potential for a European human spaceflight programme.

Conference Agenda

9.15am – 9.45pm Greeting of delegates by Bruno Le Maire, Minister for the Economy, Finance and the Recovery and doorstep

9.50am – 10.00am Opening session

10.00am – 12.15pm Informal Competitiveness Council meeting on space

- Space traffic management and the European initiative on a constellation for secure connectivity
- The European Space Agency's goals regarding the protection of EU space assets and the Rapid and Resilient Crisis Response Accelerator

12.15pm – 12.35pm Official group photo

12.40pm – 2pm Ministers' lunch

- Space exploration and climate change.

2pm Arrival of French President Emmanuel Macron

2.30pm – 3.10pm Address by French President Emmanuel Macron

3.10pm – 5.20pm European Space Agency Ministerial Council meeting

- Accelerating the use of space in Europe
- Climate change
- Science and space exploration

5.30pm – 6.00pm Joint press conference given by Bruno Le Maire, Minister for the Economy, Finance and the Recovery, Thierry Breton, European Commissioner for the Internal Market, and Josef Aschbacher, Director General of the European Space Agency

Participants



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Overview of the Host City and Meeting Venue

City of Toulouse



The city of Toulouse, **Europe's capital of the aviation and space industries**, will host the informal meeting of European Ministers responsible for Space on 16 February 2022.

Home to the headquarters of globally recognised players such as Airbus, Thalès, Spot Image and Météo France, Toulouse is at the cutting edge of research and innovation.

[Toulouse](#), called the "Pink City", is a vibrant place that is at once known for its world-leading industries and powerful technologies and laidback atmosphere steeped in a way of life specific to southwest France.

Its city centre offers a wealth of historical points of interest, including the Capitole building, the Hôtel d'Assézat (a French Renaissance hôtel particulier, or urban palace), the Basilica of Saint-Sernin and the Jacobins Monastery. In addition, the capital of France's Occitanie region has plenty of museums to choose from, such as the [Musée Saint-Raymond archeological museum](#) and the Musée des Augustins, a fine arts museum. Toulouse is also a point of departure for scenic river cruises along the [Canal du Midi](#).

The **Pierre Baudis Convention Centre**, where the conference will be held, has an auditorium and several meeting halls. It is easy to get to from Toulouse-Blagnac airport and nearby railway stations.



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